

We Made Ships

Geography Resources

There are many ways that **oral history** and the topic of **shipbuilding** can be used successfully in Geography.

Students can use spoken accounts of how industries and landscapes once were, and consider how these things have changed.

Accounts of how urban areas have changed and the impact of major rivers on people's lives also tie well into the study of places, people and communities.

River fact files

The [We Made Ships](#) site covers four major north east rivers: the Blyth, Tyne, Wear and Tees. Selecting one of these rivers, or a river nearer to your school area, ask students to create a fact file.

You could give students the freedom to design their fact files however they see fit, and obviously their areas of interest will vary depending on how much time you have spent on:

- River structures (length, source, mouth)
- Human characteristics
- Industry

Students could give only a modern image of the river, or perhaps show how it and the surrounding buildings have altered over time. Historical drawings are readily available online and in reference books which can be easily obtained from your local library.

It may be possible to invite guest speakers into school who have a knowledge of the river and how it has been influential to the area, and some students may be able to consult their families, as shown in the example below.

The River Tyne

Length:	62 miles (100km)
Mouth:	North Sea, Tynemouth
Source:	Hexham
Boundaries:	from Wylam the Tyne forms the boundary between the counties of Northumberland and Durham
Catchment:	100 square miles, 860 miles of waterway

Since 1850 the river has been maintained by the Tyne Improvement Commission and is dredged on its lower side. The river entrance has also been improved manually over time.

Now the river is cared for by the Ty River Trust who are seeking for recognition of its excellence.

"In a period of 20 years, the river has gone from being threatened by industrial pollution to being the best river in England."

The river transported coal for about 600 years and the estuary is now filled with industry and communities that make up the region 'Tyne and Wear'.

Much of the river runs through Northumberland National Park.

The river contains salmon and trout and is a popular choice for anglers.

Word Cloud: river Tyne, central, heart, rushing, North, green, important, soul, dead, passion, historical, life, miles, constituting, communities, dock, sea, courses, flow, unspilled, near, crosses, granfather, communities, dock, tributaries, Rede, last, Wall, love, six, Park, industry, section, metropolitan, Wylam, coal, North, green, large, Much, urban, basin, tidal, upon, central, Hadrian's, countryside, lined, South, counties, Roman, within, area, National, Sujwoj, least.

Map reading

Contemporary Maps

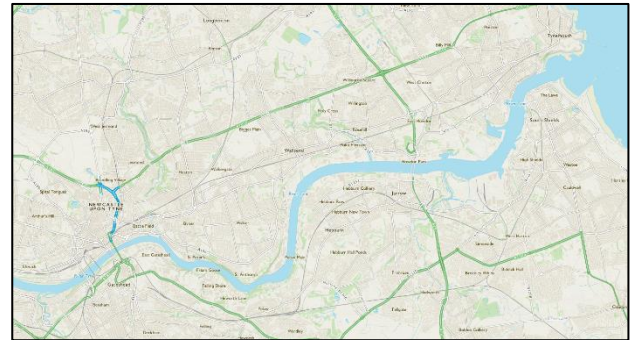
Many Geographers prefer to use local examples when teaching younger students map reading skills. Using a modern map centred around one of the four rivers, ask students to locate the following characteristics of landscape and human creation:

Landscape characteristics

- Ponds/lakes
- Footpaths
- Park/green land
- Rivers
- Coasts

Human characteristics

- Museums
- Police stations
- Post offices
- Libraries
- Hospitals
- Churches
- Roads
- Railways
- Bridges
- Other



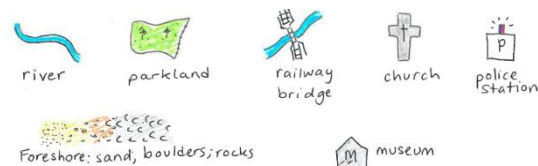
<https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/54.98772,-1.50131,13>
Map courtesy of getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk



<https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/55.00463,-1.43568,18>
Map courtesy of getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

Designing a Key

Ask your students to design their own key before showing them more traditional versions used on maps. There are some great examples at ancestry-maps.com/page-legend.asp



Mapping the Future

Students could then create their own map of a made up place, using the sorts of characteristics found alongside major rivers, or else project this knowledge to design a map of the same location at a future date.

Blast From the Past

What can students read on the map overleaf? It is James Corbridge's 1723 town plan of Newcastle Upon Tyne as reproduced by Thomas Oliver in 1851.



I see, I think, I wonder

With any photographs from the past students can generate ideas with the three sentence starters:

“I see...” “I think...” “I wonder...”



https://farm5.staticflickr.com/4206/35589561415_00309be7ae.jpg

View of the OBO carrier 'Nordic Chieftain' under construction at the North Sands shipyard, Sunderland, February 1974 (TWAM ref. DT.TUR/2/62742C).

In the 20th century the north east was responsible building for most of the world's ships.

Ask students to look closely at the photograph above, showing a ship under construction at the North Sands shipyard.

What can they see? What would a busy shipyard have sounded like? What would it have smelled like?

Use some of the oral history accounts available on the [We Made Ships](#) site to support their own ideas and impressions or, if you can, invite in someone from your community who may remember the shipyards.

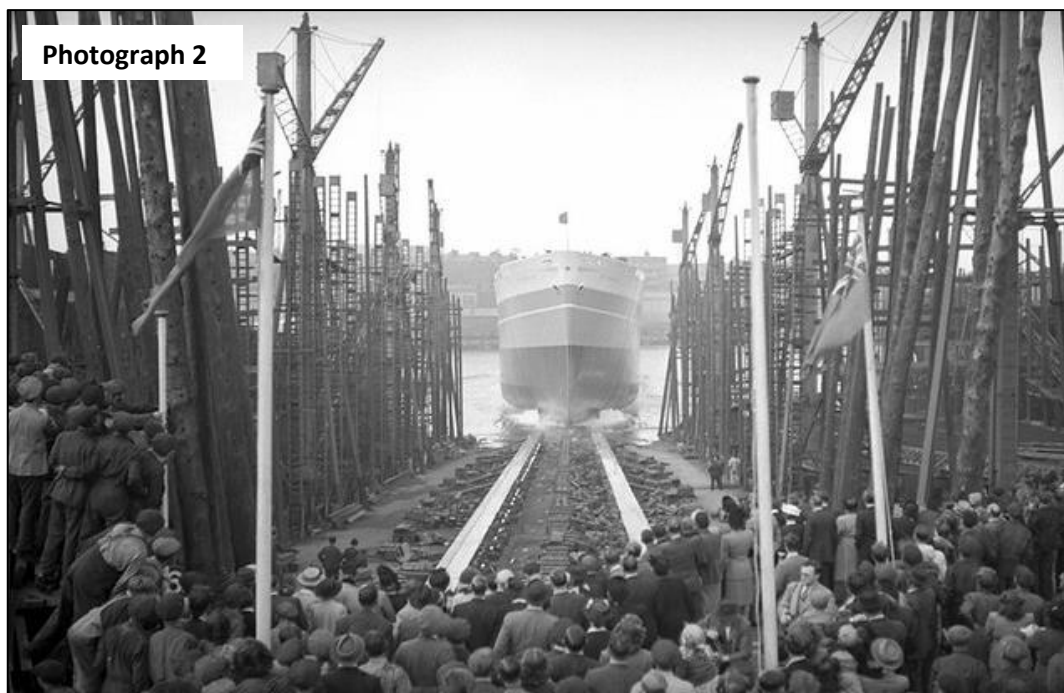
Photographs for creative thinking

Pick an individual from each photograph. What noises, sounds and smells would this person have experienced? Why is he/she there? How does he/she feel? What might he/she remember today?



https://farm9.staticflickr.com/8568/16192865119_ba3f8544e1.jpg

The bulk carrier 'Iron Endeavour' afloat after launch at the North Sands shipyard of J.L. Thompson & Sons, 24 October 1968 (TWAM ref. DS.JLT/4/PH/1/724/2). Courtesy of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.



https://farm9.staticflickr.com/8607/16433838515_3aeca2615d.jpg

Launch of 'St Essylt' at the North Sands shipyard of J.L. Thompson & Sons, 15 September 1947 (TWAM ref. DT.TUR/2/797G). Courtesy of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

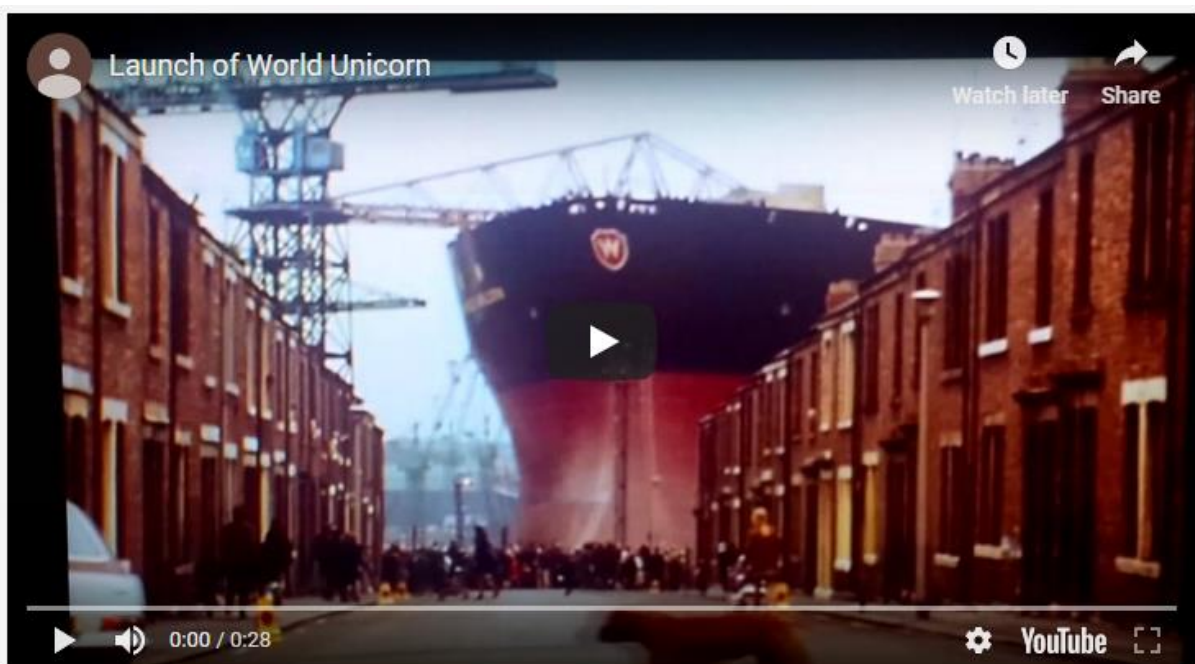
Changing places

In pairs, tables or larger groups, look at Photograph 2. It shows the launch of a ship, 'St Essylt', in 1947.

Look at the clothes people are wearing, the machinery and equipment around them, and how the people are stood. What is special or interesting about the photograph, and what might be different today if a ship was launched in our region?

Give students the option of writing in first person as one of the people in the photograph, encouraging them to engage with what was different in 1947 about the people, area and customs, as well as how they may have felt about the event.

In contrast, students can then watch the short film 'Launch of World Unicorn', by Gary Holden.



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FrZ_Zu8GQE

This will provide students with a point of comparison for class discussion, and they can focus on some of the houses, factories and vehicles shown in the film.

Which places do your students know have changed in their lifetimes? Are there any new buildings, very run-down old buildings or places with extensions in the area? Students can also go home and ask their parents and grandparents how the area has changed in their lifetimes. Some example questions for students to take away are:

- Are landmarks the same now?
- Is the area better or worse?
- Is the area quieter or louder now?
- Can you still see, smell, hear and feel the things from before? Why? Why not?
- Is the community different to before? How? Why?

